THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Based on the information furnished by University Grants Commission (UGC), there are 415 universities/institutions in the country as on 31.12.2007 and 6680 Colleges under Section 2(f) and 12 (B) of UGC Act, 1956, out of the 20,676 colleges in the country as on 31.3.2007.

(b) No such data is maintained in the Ministry. All universities and colleges, whether in urban, rural or other areas (semi-urban, hill, etc.) are poviding higher education in the country.

(c) The UGC has selected 97 colleges under the Scheme of Potential for Excellence during the X Plan. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an Inter University Centre, of UGC, has assessed and accredited 3523 Colleges as on 04.02.2008.

(d) National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) has raised the issue of lack of employability of engineering graduates in IT and IT-enabled Services (ITeS) Sectors. This is attributable, *inter alia,* to inadequate levels of communication and IT skills in engineering graduates.

Decrease in research scholars

†966. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:
SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of research scholars has come down due to not being provided better job opportunities to research scholars by Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that acute shortage of teachers who lay the foundation of education, is also its major reason;

(c) if so, whether Government would implement any plan of action to develop the attitude among students towards higher education and to give more employment opportunities to highly educated students; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) Keeping in view the declining quality and quantum of scientific research in India, a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.M. Sharma was constituted by the Central Government for basic Scientific Research in universities. In its Report, the Task Force, has *inter-alia,* recommended creation of 1000 positions of Research Scientists at various levels. The recommendations of the Task Force have been accepted by Government, and the Task Force has been converted to an Empowered Committee to implement the recommendations. The University Grants Commission has taken initiative for augmenting research and teaching resources of universities.

Intensification of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

†967. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) what effective steps are being taken by Government to intensify Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in rural areas of various States of the country;

(b) whether Government is getting any financial assistance therefor from international financial institutions;

(c) if so, the details thereof and from which institutions institution financial assistance has been received during the last three years and in which States that assistance has been used;

(d) the status of various States engaged in effective implementation of the scheme;

(e) whether Central Government monitors the functioning of States and if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (f) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme is being implemented in all districts of the country to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education in a mission mode. Various incentives including cooked mid day meal are being provided to ensure unversal enrolment of children in rural areas, in the 6—14 years age group. Consequently 98% of rural India has a primary school within one kilometer and remaining rural habitations have alternate schooling arrangements including Education Gurantee Scheme (EGS).

World Bank (WB), Department for International Development (DFID) of United Kingdom and European Commission (EC) have been providing partial financial assistance for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) on reimbursement basis. Total reimbursements claimed by Government of India from these agencies in the last three years i.e. 2004-05, 2005-06 & 2006-07 have been Rs. 1047.67 crore, Rs. 2341.98 crore & Rs. 1091.91 crore, respectively. Government of India has so far received an amount of Rs. 189.88 crores in 2007-08 as reimbursement from external funding agencies on account of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Central funds under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are released to all State/UTs on the basis of Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) submitted by State/UTs to the Government of India every year. A part of this expenditure of Government of India is reimbursed by external funding agencies.

A rigorous system of monitoring of the SSA for tracking the performance of States, is in place which includes, *inter-alia*, monthly and quarterly progress reports and review meetings, furnishing of annual elementary school statistics, field monitoring by 40 independent monitoring institutions and six monthly independent Review Missions. In addition, annual statutory audit of the State/UT SSA programmes are in place and concurrent financial reviews are also carried out. Wherever deficiencies in the implementation of the programme are noticed, such deficiencies are brought to the notice of the State Governments for corrective action.

Institutes with deemed university status

968. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: